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TO THE

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The Hon^{ble} L A D Y H I L L; *th.*

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S E T T I N G F O R T H

The Consequences of the late Sir *John Hill's*
Acquaintance with

The E A R L of B U T E.

M D C C L X X X V I I I .

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PUBLIC,

BY

The Hon^{ble} Lady HILL;

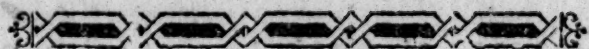
SETTING FORTH

The Correspondence of the late Sir John Hill.

Acquaintance with

The EARL OF BUTE.

MDCCLXXVIII.



IT has been said, that the human heart feels no such consolation in affliction as disclosing its sorrows to a friend. Great then will be my relief: for having truth and honour on my side, the world shall be that friend; and added to the cause of humanity, with which the British bosom ever glows, I shall excite a fellow-feeling, when I make known, that the cause of all my sufferings is that bane to this once happy land,
Lord BUTE.

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A little before his present Majesty's accession to the throne, Sir JOHN HILL's malignant star led him to know and to be known to that same Lord. Fatal acquaintance! He was, at that time, rich and happy, pursuing his favorite and delightful study, Botany; and making a rapid fortune by his medicines; — medicines which were to him reputable in the highest degree, being the result of application and of knowledge: he did not content himself with knowing the names of plants, but finding out their virtues; he considered them as the gift of GOD, meant to diffuse the blessing of health to man. This was the origin of those medicines which he presented to the world, and this was then his situation, when, O painful reflection! this happy harvest was blasted by him, whose
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baneful influence, like a pernicious misty vapour, has clouded the glorious sun of England.

Now comes attendance, unprofitable labour, promises not kept, and disappointments, from him whose pride throws LUCIFER behind.

The first employment that Lord BUTE proposed to Sir JOHN HILL, after this introduction, was the disposing and superintending a part of the Princess of WALES's Garden, at *Kew*, destined for Botany ; which was to contain all the plants known upon earth. In order to do this, he formed a correspondence with men of distinguished learning every where ; receiving and giving seeds. Even myself, after the fatal event of

his decease (which was not known abroad for some time) expended many pounds upon the same occasion ; for which, like him, I never was repaid.

His attendance was likewise at least once a week required at *Kew*.

About that time, those Islands which were conquered during the administration of the *immortal* PITT, wanted Governors, and those were appointed by Lord BUTE ; the names of some I perfectly remember, MELVILLE, JOHNSTON, STEWART, &c.

That those conquests might become profitable, Lord BUTE desired Sir JOHN HILL to direct their cultivation ; which he did, and gave each of those Governors in writing,

ing, his separate instructions ; and according to their transmitted accounts, when there, wrote back what should be dismissed, and what encouraged. *Thus the stores of merchandise, which England has received from those quarters, rose from the labours of him who never was requited.*

Sir JOHN HILL had just wrote a book of great elegance, I think it was called Exotick Botany, which he wished to have presented to the King ; and therefore named it to Lord BUTE : his Lordship waved that, saying, “ that he had a greater object which he intended to propose ; ” and shortly after laid before him a plan of the most voluminous, magnificent and costly work that ever man attempted — I tremble when I name its title, because I think the severe
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application which it required, killed him; and I am sure the expence ruined his fortune—"The Vegetable System."

This work was to consist of twenty-six volumes folio, containing sixteen hundred copper plates, the engraving of each, one with another, cost at least, FOUR GUINEAS: the paper was of the most expensive kind, the drawings by the first hands, the printing was also a very weighty concern; and many other articles with which I am unacquainted.

Sir JOHN, weighing the immense and certain expence, with the uncertain gain, as it was a subject by no means universal, wished to decline it; but Lord BUTE said, "that the expence had been considered, and that

Sir

Sir JOHN HILL might rest assured, his circumstances should not be injured by the undertaking:" Thus he entered upon and finished his destruction: for what he received from my Lord for three books, for the King, the Princess of WALES and himself, three times a year, which were the periods of its publication, together with all that were sold, bore no proportion to the expence; so he became overwhelmed in debt, which to a mind like his, honest and noble, was a burthen too bitter to be long endured.

I must observe, that during the progress of this arduous publication, Lord BUTE was eternally taking up his time and attention upon trifles, such as inventing a microscope upon a new construction, that he might see
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by day-light the ear of a butterfly or the toe of a spider; at other times poring over crucibles and poisonous vapours, which once, to my horror and extreme concern, had like to have proved fatal; perhaps he meant it so: for if Sir JOHN had taken the hints often thrown out, to have wrote in favour of the AMERICAN war, he might have made his own conditions. But He was too honest and too wise,

From that time there grew a great, but covered coolness, which I perceived; for standers by, 'tis said, are better judges of the game than those that play. I am going to mention a circumstance, which I intreat my friendly readers will attend to. After the Vegetable System was compleatly finished, Lord BUTE proposed another volume to be added,

added, which Sir JOHN strenuously opposed, as he said, it would only load the work both in matter and expence ; but his Lordship repeating his desire, Sir JOHN complied, because he would not throw water upon his cooling friendship, which wanted a pretence to cast aside repeated promises, of ample provision for himself and family. He therefore made the necessary preparations ; such as drawings, engravings, paper, and other materials, too numerous to mention.

The recollection of what followed, makes my heart tremble, and my whole frame suffers an agitation, too great to be described ; this was the crisis of my fate ! Like some poor quivering creature hanging on a precipice, fearing to fall, yet sees the plunge inevitable, for so it proved — before the ho-

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noured author wrote a line of this extorted task, he died.

Thus did a character on which every virtue was impressed, and whose genius, worth and learning, after-ages shall extol, become a victim to the greatest tyrant that ever disgraced humanity.

Now view me stunned with the mortal blow, too deep in sorrow for the relief of tears ; children looking up to her for protection, who wanted it herself.

If any intermission to this temporary death, it was but to shew the horrors of my situation ; thus I remained, till nature, ever varying in her course, changed this state of stupefaction for more poignant grief.

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The physician who attended Sir JOHN HILL, a very worthy and distinguished character, perceiving the inactive state of me and those about me, came voluntarily, with another gentleman, to search if they could find a will: a will was found; it was dated some years back, and had, been made, I believe, when he was in better circumstances: Lord BUTE and myself were named executors; it was therefore thought fit it should be taken to his Lordship; a gentleman who was intimate in his house, and who had ever been received in ours with hospitality, was fixed upon for this commission; the account which he brought back was, that my Lord seemed much shocked at the event, expressed concern that he could not act as an executor, were it his own brother (*those were his words*) his health being so

impaired ; hoped I would be comforted as much as so great a loss would suffer me to be ; at the same time said, he would endeavour to obtain a pension for me.

Being the only actor in this business, replete with sorrow and anxiety, I was told I must administer, the doing which soon proved the will to be of no effect ; for the debts by infinite degrees exceeded all the property. Those debts, which were indeed tremendous, I have, from that time, laboured to discharge, because I would have Sir JOHN HILL's memory suiting his distinguished merit, preserved with honour.

About six weeks after his decease, though nothing whatsoever had happened to alter Lord BUTE's sentiments with regard to
me,

me, the same person, who brought the message which I before related, came with a very different air, desiring to see me, and produced a note written by Lord BUTE to him, in such a stile as would disgrace the meanest person, accusing me of having given out, the Lord knows what, for it was too idle to attend to, nor was it possible that I could report any thing, having neither been abroad, nor seen any persons but those who were at first about me.

From that time Lord BUTE became a most inveterate enemy to her, whose situation claimed from every feeling heart compassion. I wrote to him, and represented, that the difficulties which surrounded me were too many to be numbered, and that that book, the cause of all, was only a dead weight,
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and made me (as I had unfortunately found) a prey to villains, from being ignorant in such concerns. I conjured him, as it was at his instigation alone that it was wrote, to take it off my hands on any terms; but he remained inexorable.

I then had those materials that were prepared for the additional volume, together with the account of what I had given for them, which was between two and three hundred pounds, sent to his Lordship with a letter, in which I requested him, as they could never be of any use to me, to pay me back what they had cost. He returned them with a written answer, most unlike a gentleman, rough and rude, that he had nothing to do with them; though he had sent two Germans to my house, to examine
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the work, in order to finish it, if they had been equal to the task; but they confessed they were not : and as a further proof that his assertion was destitute of truth, at the times of publication, he directed to whom several books should be *given*, as to the different universities of *Scotland*, and to some Doctor at *Edinburgh*, whose name I do not remember ; also to several men of learning abroad, and to Doctor WATSON of *Lincoln's-inn-fields*, who, after Sir JOHN's decease, sent to me for the last volume to compleat his set, not asking it as any favour from me, but by Lord BUTE's direction.

Having relinquished all hopes of justice and humanity, I wrote to Lord BUTE, that I would have recourse to law ; fool that I was !

was! why should I hope redress from law of him?

Before I could take any measures to avail myself of what I had threatened, he sent his lawyer to me; fit for the purpose as his heart could wish! Permit me to relate what passed, by way of question and answer.

Lawyer. Madam, I have the honour of waiting upon your Ladyship, at the command of the Earl of BUTE, a most noble Lord, a Lord of great power and authority, and a Lord of ——

Answer. No matter what, Sir, but tell your message.

Lawyer. Madam, you cut me short.

Answer.

Answer. Sir, I will be shorter, for I'll say nothing.

Lawyer. Then, Madam, this aforefaid most noble Lord hath informed, made known, and acquainted me, that Dame HENRIETTA HILL, relict of Sir JOHN HILL, doth propose, intend and mean to prefer a bill in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery against the aforefaid most noble Earl, for damages by her sustained, in consequence and upon account of an expensive work undertaken and written by the aforefaid late Sir JOHN HILL: am I, Madam, possessed of the cause?

Answer. Yes, Sir,

Lawyer. Then, Madam, we will proceed

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to state the case: Be it remembered, that if my most noble client had proposed, desired and directed the aforesaid Sir JOHN HILL to begin, go on and continue this the aforesaid expensive work, so that his circumstances were thereby injured or impaired —

Answer. What then, Sir?

Lawyer. Why then, Madam, your Ladyship would doubtless obtain damages according to the loss by you sustained, with costs of suit.

Answer. Sir, I am rejoiced that Lord BUTE has employed so intelligent a gentleman to end our difference; for you have exactly stated my complaint.

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In one moment his visage changed, and his voice was not the same; he uttered only broken sentences and incoherent jargon, such as, mistaken agreement—writing—witnesses—and such like paultry comings-off, as shewed a base employer and a worthless agent.

Where death has left his sting, great alterations commonly take place! and those are seldom secret; so it was with me: for it was soon known that I was not in prosperous circumstances: but I must also say, with satisfaction, that I did not experience less attention from my friends, but more.

Many of them pressed me to make immediate application for a pension, particularly the late Duchess of NORTHUMBERLAND, who,

though she was very ill herself, and soon after ended a most valuable life, wrote a letter of condolance to me, wherein she proved the goodness of her heart; for it contained every sentiment of feeling and regard. She was pleased to say, I had a double claim to royal favour, being sister to Lord RANELAGH and widow of Sir JOHN HILL, whom every body respected and lamented; and that there being every reason for, and none against it, she hoped and thought there was no doubt of my success.

I did apply, but like a teasing ticket remaining in the wheel, I heard no more of it.

Three or four years after, the Dutchess of ARGYLE (for whom I shall ever feel respect
and

and gratitude) did me the honour of presenting a memorial for me to the Queen: and though I am not much given to hope, being so long acquainted with adversity, yet upon this occasion, I entertained for some time this pleasing visitor, but she fled from me, and I am still without a pension.

And now, lest I encroach upon the patience of the generous public (sure friend of the unhappy!) to whom I first addressed myself, I will hasten to the close of my sad narrative; which, however defective in point of authorship, I trust their candor will forgive, as I have taken every measure to avoid this publication, and since compelled, my aim has been to relate truth — unquestionable truth; nor should I have presumed to have laid before them my complaints,

complaints, though great my sufferings, but that my husband's memory has been injured by his dying so deep in debt, the cause not being known; and last of all, *That my enemy is theirs: the same Lord BUTE who lost them a world, has poorly stooped to heap oppression upon an object, whom our religion tells us, is the peculiar care of Heaven — a widow.*

F I N I S.

